

Growth Management Planning Council Hearing  
Topic: Countywide planning policies  
Date: September 21, 2011

Save Black Diamond  
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To the Members of the Growth Management Planning Council:

Save Black Diamond is an organization that is working to protect and improve the city of Black Diamond and the surrounding rural area including Green Valley Road. We were catalyzed by an over-sized development proposal for our area, but we will be involved in many issues over the long-term that affect our community.

We have a number of goals which are greatly affected by County Planning Policies. You've already received almost 40 signatures our members collected in a weekend regarding school locations. Simply put, when a school serves a student population that lives mostly in the city, everyone is better off when that school is located in the city.

We will continue to fight to put schools and other services for city populations *in* the city limits, and grow awareness of this issue with voters. We know this leads to a better future for Black Diamond, and is a better policy for everyone in the county.

What follows are some of our goals, and how they fit with the County Planning Policies and the location of schools and other facilities:

1. Goal: We want growth management land use decisions to be based on the public interest and good technical information.

As stated, a school that serves mostly city students should be located in the city near more of those students. This serves the public interest because:

- The city gets the amenity of a school which the community can use for open space, sports, meetings, and adult education or recreation classes.
- The students get a better education and more exercise.
- The school district saves on busing costs.
- The county does not have to provide road maintenance, build sewer lines, or provide other services

In Black Diamond, the developer is proposing to put schools to be in the rural area so that they won't lose development potential within their own urban area. This is simply a way for them to make more money. It exports the impacts of their development on the surrounding rural and farming areas. Our wonderful farming district in the Green River Valley will experience ruinous urban impacts because of this plan.

2. Goal: We want to confront the inappropriate power of large land developers by creating a well-informed and engaged citizenry.

- a. It is clear that there are politicians supporting a large land developer in Black Diamond by asking to put schools outside of the city of Black Diamond. These school locations are on land owned by the developer. Allowing the Enumclaw School District to use these sites that they do not even own yet would clearly be a favor to the developer, and would set a bad precedent. Many other developers may seek to do the same thing.
- b. Any amendment to allow water detention ponds outside the city limits when they serve developments inside city limits has the same problem. The developer should deal with the water runoff problem in their own development. We do not support any amendments that allow the necessary pieces of a development (ponds, roads, fire stations, etc.) to be placed outside the city limits and in the county when the development is in the city.

Small land owners do not have the political clout to get politicians from the Suburban Cities Association or the King County Council to submit amendments to county planning policies for them. Our long term goal is to stop the inappropriate power of large land developers, so we want to stop these exceptions being requested for them.

3. Goal: We want growth to not be harmful to the environment.

- a. Putting a school in the rural area causes more people to drive, and drive more miles, to get to the schools. Thus there is more pollution from automobiles. This also will make it harder to meet county greenhouse gas targets.
- b. Putting schools and detention ponds in the rural area uses up more land. Keeping that land at rural zoning within the county means it almost certainly will remain more natural, providing more wildlife habitat, clean air, and open space for King County residents. Environmentally, a school or a detention means more natural acres lost to development. We support anything the county can do to stop this loss.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments and thank you for your public service. We hope to work with the Growth Management Planning Council in the future on this and related issues.

Thank you.

Submitted by Steering Committee Members  
Kristen Bryant, Rebecca Sullivan, Monica Stewart

On behalf of  
Save Black Diamond